

# Fakenham High School and College

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	121185
<b>Local Authority</b>	Norfolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	313910
<b>Inspection date</b>	12 May 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	John Godwood

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	1398
6th form	365
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Tim Lidstone-Scott
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Richard Moore
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	9 February 2004
<b>School address</b>	Field Lane Fakenham Norfolk NR21 9QT
<b>Telephone number</b>	01328 862545
<b>Fax number</b>	01328 851767

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<b>Age group</b>	11–19
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors. Inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the impact of specialist status on students' achievement; the consistency and impact of leadership and management; sixth form achievement, teaching, leadership and management. Evidence was gathered from observations of lessons and students' work; discussions with the headteacher, senior staff, governors and students; parents' questionnaires and the school's self-evaluation documents. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

The school is larger than average and has a large sixth form. It is on two sites, with the sixth form based at Fakenham College, half a mile from the High School. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is average. The number requiring additional support for learning difficulties is typical for a school of this size. A very small proportion of students are from minority ethnic backgrounds, although the number speaking English as an additional language is increasing.

The school has twin specialisms in technology and vocational learning. It holds many awards, including Sportsmark, Artsmark, Investors in People, Education Extra, a Schools Curriculum Award and the Silver Award for Sustainable Schools. It has in recent years found difficulty in recruiting specialist staff, particularly at middle leadership level and for the post of head of sixth form.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school. The headteacher and senior leadership team are forward looking and encourage staff to develop new ideas. The school has a positive ethos and provides students with an outstanding range of opportunities that are tailored very well to their individual needs. As a result, students enjoy their learning and all groups of students achieve well. Most parents are pleased with the school.

Achievement and standards are good. When students join the school in Year 7, their attainment is average. By Year 9, standards are above average, which is an improvement since the last inspection. Students make good progress in English, mathematics and science. All groups of students make equally good progress, including those who receive additional support for learning difficulties. Students continue to make good progress in Years 10 and 11 and attain above average GCSE results. There is some variation in the performance of different subjects, with outstanding progress in mathematics, but weaker results in some other subjects. The school's specialist status has a positive impact on students' achievement, with the school meeting most of its targets in the specialist subjects of technology and mathematics. Developments in vocational education are leading to a further rise in standards in the current school year.

Teaching and learning are good overall. There is some outstanding practice but also too much variation in quality across subjects. Most lessons are well planned to match students' abilities and ensure good learning. Students are generally attentive and behave well, although both students and parents note that a minority of lessons are disrupted, and that this is linked to the quality of teaching. Some subjects, including English, humanities and technology, provide students with very clear guidance on how well they are doing and what they are aiming for, encouraging students to take responsibility for their own learning. This practice is not, however, consistent across the school, and marking is not always sufficiently helpful or frequent. The school's specialist status has been used well to provide training for all staff on new teaching techniques and innovative use of technology.

Students' good achievement is due also to an outstanding curriculum. As a result of its specialist status, the school is at the forefront of developing a wide range of courses and matching these to students' individual needs. It plays a leading role in the growing collaboration between local schools and colleges and is thus able to extend the opportunities available. For gifted and talented students, there is a good range of additional examination courses and other challenges that are appreciated by students and parents. The extra support for students who find learning difficult is very well organised and results in their making consistently good progress. Students' options include a wide range of GCSE subjects and many vocational courses, some provided within the school and others through its links with other providers. Three-fifths of students in Years 10 and 11 take a vocational subject, and this is leading to a rise in standards. Students who benefit from work-related learning are able to spend a whole day each week at college or on work experience. The proportion of students gaining qualifications in literacy and numeracy is above the national average. Students participate well in a wide range of trips and extra-curricular activities, particularly in music, drama and sport.

Several parents commented on their children's growth in confidence due to the school's good atmosphere and range of opportunities. Students agree that it is a happy community. Their personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural

development, are good. Students act in a safe manner and most believe that if bullying occurs it is swiftly dealt with. They learn effectively to lead healthy lifestyles through their sporting activities and through a recent project with canteen staff to plan menus. Behaviour is generally good, although the behaviour of a minority is distracting to others in a few lessons. New procedures for managing behaviour have led to a significant improvement in the current school year. Attendance has also improved due to closer monitoring and immediate follow-up, but remains broadly average. Students contribute well to their school and wider community. Older students mentor younger ones and Year 11 students take on responsibilities as prefects. Students are regularly consulted on their views. The school council organises charity events such as a sponsored walk for a Kenyan orphanage. Through their vocational learning and work experience, students are well prepared for the world of work.

Good care, guidance and support contribute to students' personal development. There are robust procedures for child protection and ensuring safety in school. Several parents commented on the good care provided by heads of year, and students are confident there is someone to approach if they have a concern. Year 7 students settle in well as a result of good induction arrangements. The support for students who are vulnerable or have particular needs is particularly effective: staff know them well and track their progress carefully. The school's examination results show that it is successful in its aim to be inclusive. All students are set challenging targets for their achievement, and their progress in relation to these is reviewed regularly. Students receive additional support from their tutors and learning mentors. Guidance within lessons in relation to targets is outstanding in some departments but is not developed equally well across all subjects. The school holds the careers excellence award for work-related learning.

The school's success is due to good leadership and management. The headteacher provides a clear direction that is well focused on raising standards for all students. Self-evaluation is thorough and generally accurate. Planning is based on clear priorities and involves governors and leaders at all levels. The senior leadership team are dynamic in leading new developments in teaching and learning, curricular opportunities and social inclusion. These developments bring a sense of enthusiasm to the school and have a positive effect on students' learning, although some are too recent to have had a significant impact on examination results. Middle management is generally good. Subject leaders are encouraged to support the school's priorities through their own plans. As a result, several departments have developed high quality teaching practice, but there is too much variation in quality across the departments. The school has responded creatively to its difficulties in recruiting some specialist staff, but these have slowed progress in some subjects and in the college management team. Governors fulfil their role well. They have an accurate understanding of the school and provide both support and challenge in determining its future direction. The quality of leadership and the school's track record show that it has good capacity to improve further.

## **Effectiveness of the sixth form**

### **Grade: 3**

Fakenham College is a satisfactory sixth form. A-level results are broadly average and students make satisfactory progress in relation to their attainment on entry. Standards vary across different subjects. Shortly after the last inspection, results dipped quite significantly. The school took effective action to improve the weakest subjects and, for the past two years, results have been gradually improving, although students' progress is not yet as high as it was in 2004. In

the current school year, improved individual guidance has led to a further rise in standards, which is more marked in Year 12 than in Year 13.

Care, guidance and support are now good. Students appreciate the guidance they receive on personal and academic matters. They each have a personal mentor, although there is a lack of rigour in checking whether students make appointments to meet them. They are well prepared for careers and university. Attendance has improved through closer monitoring, but remains too low for some students. Nevertheless, students' personal development and well-being are good. They enjoy college life and establish good relationships, appreciating the encouragement to take responsibility and develop their independence.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. There is much good teaching. Students appreciate the additional help that many teachers provide, but note that teaching quality varies across different subjects. Several parents and a few students expressed concern that sometimes teachers are not present for lessons, even though work is usually set. For a minority of students, their learning suffers due to poor attendance. The college has a good curriculum, with courses to suit students of a wide range of abilities and interests. There is a good range of additional activities.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Due to staffing difficulties, the college management team is under strength and there is no permanent head of sixth form. New appointments of guidance staff have strengthened management, and the college runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis. Subject performance is reviewed, but there is a lack of rigour in monitoring teaching and students' participation in activities. The capacity to improve is satisfactory.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Ensure greater consistency of teaching and learning.
- Further raise standards and achievement in the sixth form.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall	16-19
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### Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	

### Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
How well learners enjoy their education	2	
The attendance of learners	3	
The behaviour of learners	2	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	2

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	